

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 USBERLIN 0474

E O 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT BQG WB
SUBJ: STOBBE MEETING WITH ABRASIMOV

SUMMARY: BERLIN'S GOVERNING MAYOR DIETRICH STOBBE MET WITH
SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO THE GDR ABRASIMOV FOR A FOUR HOUR DISCUSSION
OVER DINNER FEBRUARY 27. MAJOR POINT OF DISCUSSION WAS
APPLICATION OF THE QUADRIpartite AGREEMENT AND IN PARTICULAR
THE QUESTION OF "TIES". ABRASIMOV REPEATED WELL-KNOWN SOVIET
POSITION THAT FRG WAS OVERLOADING CIRCUIT WITH RESPECT TO
POLITICAL "BINDUNGEN" BUT SPECIFICALLY SAID HE HAD NO COMPLAINTS
ABOUT WEST BERLIN'S EFFORTS TO EXPAND "VERBINDUNGEN" WITH FRG
AND TO EXPAND "BINDUNGEN" IN COMMERCIAL, CULTURAL OR
ECONOMIC SPHERES. AT CONCLUSION OF MEETING ABRASIMOV STATED
EXPLICITLY THAT HE FELT THERE IS "NO NEED FOR A NEW AGREEMENT
ON BERLIN, IT IS ONLY NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT PROPERLY
THE PRESENT ONE." POSSIBLE VISIT TO STOBBE TO MOSCOW
DID NOT ARISE, ALTHOUGH QUESTIONS OF NORTHERN CROSSING
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POINT AND WEST BERLIN'S ENERGY PROBLEMS WERE DISCUSSED.
PRESS COVERAGE HAS BEEN LIGHT AS SENAT HAS THUS FAR
PROVIDED NO INFORMATION ON SUBSTANCE OF DISCUSSIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO GDR ABRASIMOV, ACCOMPANIED BY
MINISTER KHOTULEV AND THEIR WIVES, AND SOVIET FIRST
SECRETARY TYUTYUNOV (WHO SERVED AS INTERPRETER) HELD

FOUR HOUR DISCUSSION WITH BERLIN GOVERNING MAYOR DIETRICH STOBBE OVER DINNER AT SENAT GUEST HOUSE FEBRUARY 27. STOBBE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE AND CHIEF OF THE SENAT CHANCELLERY GERHARD HEIMANN AND AN INTERPRETER BROUGHT FROM BONN TO BERLIN ESPECIALLY FOR THE MEETING.

2. ACCORDING TO HEIMANN, WHO BRIEFED ALLIED SENAT LIAISON OFFICERS FEBRUARY 28, THE EARLY PART OF THE EVENING (COCKTAILS AND DINNER) WAS SPENT IN INFORMAL "GETTING TO KNOW YOU" CONVERSATION IN WHICH EVERYONE TOOK PART. FOLLOWING DINNER, STOBBE AND HEIMANN AND THEIR INTERPRETER RETIRED WITH ABRASIMOV AND KHOTULEV TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE WHILE TYUTYUNOV JOINED THE LADIES IN THE OTHER ROOM FOR MORE GENERAL CONVERSATION. HEIMANN DESCRIBED THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN ABRASIMOV AND STOBBE AS "INTENSIVE;" ABRASIMOV'S STYLE AND PRESENTATION THROUGHOUT THE EVENING WAS "POLITE" BUT IN AREAS OF SUBSTANCES HE WAS DESCRIBED AS BEING "VERY HARD."

3. ABRASIMOV BEGAN THE AFTER DINNER DISCUSSION WITH THE REMARK THAT HE CONSIDERS HIMSELF MORE OF A POLITICIAN THAN A DIPLOMAT AND ASKED STOBBE THAT HE, ABRASIMOV, BE PERMITTED TO SPEAK AS ONE POLITICIAN TO ANOTHER RATHER THAN AS A DIPLOMAT. THE DISCUSSION DEALT ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREE-CONFIDENTIAL

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MENT, SPECIFICALLY WITH THE ISSUE OF BERLIN'S TIES TO THE FRG. HEIMANN TOLD THE SLO'S THAT THERE WERE ACTUALLY NO REAL SURPRISES DURING THIS PART OF THE DISCUSSION. ABRASIMOV SAID THE SOVIETS HAVE NO OBJECTION TO WEST BERLIN DEVELOPING ITS PHYSICAL LINKS (VERBINDUNGEN) WITH THE FRG, AND DID NOT OBJECT THAT THE FRG SOUGHT TO EXPAND ITS CULTURAL, COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC TIES (BINDUNGEN) AS WELL. IN ABRASIMOV'S VIEW, HOWEVER, THERE WERE ENTIRELY TOO MANY DEMONSTRATIVE WEST GERMAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN WEST BERLIN. HE SPECIFIED MEETINGS OF LANDTAGFRAKTIONEN AND VISITS BY FRG MINISTERS AND THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT.

4. STOBBE IN TURN SET FORTH THE BASIC WESTERN COUNTER ARGUMENTS TO ABRASIMOV'S POSITION, NOTING, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT MEETINGS OF LANDTAGFRAKTIONEN ARE NOT

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FORBIDDEN BY THE QA, AND THAT VISITS BY FRG MINISTERS
ARE PART AND PARCEL OF THE ESTABLISHED TIES BETWEEN WEST BERLIN
AND THE FRG. STOBBE THEN WENT ON TO DEVELOP THE ARGUMENT THAT
ONE CANNOT SIMPLY LOOK AT THE SITUATION IN BERLIN FROM A NARROW
LEGAL STANDPOINT, BUT MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT EQUALLY THE POLITICAL
SITUATION AS WELL. STOBBE TOLD ABRASIMOV THAT HE VIEWED THE QA
TO BE A DOCUMENT IN WHICH THE OFTEN CONFLICTING INTERESTS
OF THE TWO SIDES OVER THE EXISTING SITUATION WERE
TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT ON THE BASIS OF POLITICAL REALITY.
STOBBE ARGUED THAT ONE CANNOT TALK ABOUT THE QA WITHOUT
PUTTING IT INTO A BROADER POLITICAL FRAMEWORK. IN
PARTICULAR, IT IS NECESSARY TO KEEP THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF
THE WARSAW, MOSCOW AND BASIC (FRG-GDR) TREATIES IN
VIEW WHEN DEALING WITH THE SITUATION IN BERLIN. STOBBE
POINTED OUT THAT THE FRG WOULD NEVER HAVE TAKEN THE STEP OF
RECOGNIZING THE GDR HAD IT NOT BEEN PREDISPOSED TO ACCEPT
POLITICAL REALITIES AS THEY ARE. STOBBE ARGUED THAT BOTH SIDES
MUST BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT A CERTAIN BALANCING OF INTERESTS;
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WITHOUT SUCH AN ACCEPTANCE THERE IS NO REAL BASIS
FOR DETENTE. LOOKING AT BERLIN'S SITUATION, STOBBE

ARGUED, IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE EAST TO ACCEPT THAT THE WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN ARE DE FACTO A PART OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC JUST AS THE SOVIET SECTOR OF BERLIN IS RECOGNIZED AS BEING DE FACTO A PART OF THE GDR BY THE WEST, EVEN THOUGH THE LEGAL SITUATION IS CLEARLY DEFINED DIFFERENTLY.

5. WITH RESPECT TO BERLIN'S TIES WITH THE FRG, STOBBE ARGUED THE POSITION HE HAD DEVELOPED LAST YEAR IN HIS EUOPA ARCHIV ARTICLE, NAMELY THAT TIES (BINDUNGEN) BETWEEN WEST BERLIN AND THE FRG SHOULD BE DEVELOPED NOT ONLY ON THE BASIS OF WHAT IS POLITICALLY EXPEDIENT (ZWECKMAESSIG).

6. SUMMING UP, HEIMANN SAID, STOBBE CHOSE HIS WORDS VERY CAREFULLY, SEEKING TO PAINT A REALISTIC PICTURE OF THE SITUATION, AND ARGUING THAT THE SOVIETS TOO, MUST ACCEPT THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION IN BERLIN. HEIMANN REPORTED THAT ABRASIMOV IN REPLY BRIEFLY BUT CLEARLY STATED THAT THAT HE DID NOT SEE ANY LINKAGE OR INTER-RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MOSCOW, WARSAW AND BASIC TREATIES AND THE QUADRIpartite AGREEMENT. THE LAST NAMED, IN ABRASIMOV'S OPINION, MUST BE VIEWED SEPARATELY AND INDEPENDENTLY (WHICH, HEIMANN COMMENTED TO THE SLO'S, MAKES IT EASIER FOR THE RUSSIANS TO ARGUE A RESTRICTIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE QA.)

7. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE DISCUSSION HOWEVER, ABRASIMOV VOLUNTEERED THE OBSERVATION THAT: WE DON'T NEED A NEW AGREEMENT, IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE APPLICATION OF THE PRESENT ONE." HEIMANN SAID THIS COMMENT STRUCK HIM AS BEING ONE OF THE MORE POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT COMMENTS ABRASIMOV MADE DURING THE COURSE OF THE WHOLE EVENING. THE OTHER SIGNIFICANT POINT IN THE CONVERSATION, CONFIDENTIAL

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IN HEIMANN'S OPINION, WAS THAT ABRASIMOV RAISED ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE THE SUBJECTS OF THE NORTHER CROSSING POINT, AND DELIVERY OF ENERGY TO WEST BERLIN.

8. HEIMANN REPORTED THAT ABRASIMOV MADE IT RATHER CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO CHANCE THAT A POWER LINE COULD BE BUILT FROM THE EAST ACROSS THE GDR TO THE FRG (IN SHORT, THAT THE KALININGRAD PROJECT IS DEAD), BUT THAT THE GDR OFFER TO PROVIDE WEST BERLIN WITH ELECTRICITY WAS A SERIOUS ONE WHICH THE SENAT SHOULD CONSIDER. STOBBE REPLIED THAT THE SENAT HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO BUILD AN ADDITIONAL POWER PLANT AT RUHLBEN NEAR TEGEL AIRPORT PERMITTING THE CITY TO MEET ITS OWN POWER NEEDS THROUGH THE 1980'S. FURTHER, STOBBE SAID, THE WEST BERLIN GOVERNMENT WAS PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN TYING INTO THE WEST GERMAN POWER GRID. IF AND WHEN SUCH A LINKUP HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED THE SENAT WOULD CONSIDER DISCUSSING SERIOUSLY POWER DELIVERIES FROM THE GDR.

9. ADDRESSING THE QUESTION OF THE NORTHERN CROSSING POINT,
ABRASIMOV ASKED WHY THE SENAT HAD NOT RESPONDED
POSITIVELY TO THE GDR'S OFFER FOR A CROSSING POINT AT

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ZERNENDORFER WEG. STOBBE LISTED THE SENAT'S OBJECTIONS
TO THE GDR PROPOSAL AND ASKED IN TURN WHY THE GDR
OPPOSED SELLING THE DUCK BILL.

10. HEIMANN SAID ABRASIMOV TOOK NOTE OF STOBBE'S
COMMENT ON BOTH ISSUES, AND AFTER MAKING A DISCLAIMER
THAT BOTH SUBJECTS WERE OF COURSE MATTERS FOR THE GDR
TO DEAL WITH AS WAS ITS SOVEREIGN RIGHT, SAID HE
WOULD PASS ON THE GOVERNING MAYOR'S REMARKS.

11. IN CLOSING, ABRASIMOV INVITED THE GOVERNING MAYOR
TO EAST BERLIN, POSSIBLY IN APRIL. STOBBE ACCEPTED
IN PRINCIPLE. NO DATE WAS SET.

12. COMMENTING ON THE GENERAL TENOR OF THE MEETING,
HEIMANN SAID HE FELT ABRASIMOV MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT
NOT TO BE DIFFICULT. ALTHOUGH ABRASIMOV PRESENTED

HIS ARGUMENTS FORCEFULLY, HE DID SO POLITELY, CHOOSING
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TO MAKE HIS POINTS BY ASKING RHETORICAL
QUESTIONS RATHER THAN MAKING CHARGES OF LODGING COM-
PLAINTS. ABRASIMOV DID NOT RAISE SENSITIVE ISSUES
SUCH AS THE NATIONALSTIFTUNG, EXFILTRATION, OR WEST
BERLIN'S RELATIONS WITH THE EC. HEIMANN SUMMARIZED
THE EVENING AS HAVING BEEN USEFUL, BUT HE STRESSED
THAT NEITHER HE NOR THE GOVERNING MAYOR HAD HEARD
ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT INDICATE ANY "BREAKTHROUGHS"
IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. HEIMANN WAS CLEARLY
INTRIGUED BY ABRASIMOV'S COMMENT THAT NO NEW BERLIN
AGREEMENT WAS NECESSARY; ALSO THAT ABRASIMOV CHOSE TO
RAISE TWO SUBJECTS CURRENTLY BEING DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE
SENAT AND THE GDR.

13. COMMENT: WE SHARE HEIMANN'S GENERAL ASSESS-
MENT OF THE MEETING. STOBBE HAS A BIT MORE FREEDOM TO
WANDER THAN THE ALLIES MIGHT IN SOME AREAS - PARTICULAR-
LY IN THE REALM OF DISCUSSING "THE POLITICAL REALITIES"
OF BERLIN. IT DOESN'T HURT TO HAVE THESE THINGS SAID
IN PRIVATE ONCE AND AWHILE, HOWEVER. ON BALANCE, IT
WAS GOOD THAT STOBBE AND ABRASIMOV HAD THE OPPORTUNITY
TO MEET FACE TO FACE TO EXCHANGE VIEWS. PROTOCOL
MORE OR LESS OBLIGES ABRASIMOV TO RETURN THE INVITATION
TO STOBBE SOON, AS WE HAVE NO DIFFICULTIES WITH STOBBE
ACCEPTING IT. (PRIVATELY, WE EXPECT THE NEXT ROUND
IN EAST BERLIN WILL BE LESS CHUMMY THAN THE FIRST GET
TOGETHER.) WE WOULD HOPE A DECENT PAUSE WOULD THEN
FOLLOW BEFORE ANY FURTHER MEETINGS ARE HELD. END COMMENT.
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